THE CARLYLE CIRCLE.

A RECORD OF MISERY

THOMAS CARLYLE—JANE CARLYLE—EMERSON.

"To set about writing my own life," said Carlyle in a letter to Emerson in 1867, "would be no less than horrible to me, and shall of a certainty never be done. The common impious vulgar of this earth what has it to do with my life or me? Let dignified oblivion, silence, and the vacant azure of Eternity swallow *me*; for my share of it, that, verily, is the handsomest, or one handsome way, of settling my poor account with the *canaille* of mankind, extant and to come." And yet it would be hard to find a parallel to the surprising chapters of autobiography in which Carlyle has exposed to this same impious vulgar of the earth the secrets of an unhappy life and the ugliest features of a defective character. We refer not so much to the disclosures of the "Reminiscences" as to the exhibition of the domestic penetralia in the "Letters and Memorials" of his wife. The central figure in these letters is not Jane Welsh Carlyle; it is the turbulent philosopher and exacting husband to whom she devoted a life of heroic sacrifice. And we must not forget that although the formal responsibility of publishing was laid upon Mr. Froude, it was Carlyle himself who prepared the book for the press, leaving it to his friend under circumstances which almost took away that friend's discretion as to the use to be made of it. Virtually the publication is Carlyle's own. If it bring any discredit upon his memory, we can blame no injudicious biographer. It is the sage himself who has laid bare that part of his life which the most reckless biographer would hardly have dared to touch.

The portrait of Mrs. Carlyle engraved for the book represents a strong but singularly sweet and winning face, expressing intelligence, vivacity, and—in the good sense of the word—sentiment. She was charming in society; her powers of appreciation were high, her native intellect was vigorous, her mind was cultivated, she shone in the company of men of mark who sought Carlyle's house, and was at her ease in the high discourse which filled the Chelsea evenings. All who were admitted to that circle brought away a delightful impression of her, as a model helpmeet and a bright and genial influence softening the asperities of a fretful life. Without her it seemed as if Carlyle could hardly have maintained intercourse with the human race. She repaired errors, atoned for wrongs, prevented brutalities, called out whatever was best in the nature of her perverse consort, offered the sympathy and personal tenderness which even the most savage of philosophers cannot discard without some distinct injury to his own soul. Her temperament was an unusual combination of the intellectual and the emotional. Even apart from the testimony of her acquaintances, there is evidence enough in this collection of the letters of thirty years that she was a woman of acute, active and independent mind. Her comments upon persons and events are shrewd and pointed. Her literary judgments are now and then surprising, but they are real judgments—not the mere headlong expression of womanish fancies. She possessed a rich fund of humor, together with the higher quality of wit. The felicity of her personal descriptions, and reports of conversation and characteristic remarks, often gave to her familiar letters a high literary value. Even when she wrote about household worries she was brilliant and entertaining; she was always natural: and sometimes she verged unconsciously upon the poetical. We do not recall any published correspondence so burdened as that of Jane Carlyle with sordid cares and trivial confidences, and yet in the whole collection there is not a mean nor an uninteresting letter. There are letters which ought never to have been printed, but there are none which will be found dull to read. As an example of lively narrative, take this extract from an account of the daily life at Chelsea, written to Carlyle while he was on a visit to Scotland:

"Our visiting has been confined to one dinner and two teas at the Sterling's, and a tea at Hunt's! You must know —— —— came the day after you went, and stayed two days. As she desired above all things to see Hunt, I wrote him a note, asking if I might bring her up to call. He replied he was just setting off to town, but would look in at 8 o'clock. I supposed this, as usual, a mere off-put; but he actually came—found Pepoli as well as Miss ——, was amazingly lively, and very lasting, for he stayed till near 12. Between ourselves, it gave me a poorish opinion of him to see how uplifted to the third heaven he seemed by ——'s compliments and sympathizing talk. He asked us all, with enthusiasm, to tea the following Monday. —— came on purpose, and slept here. He sang, talked like a pen gun, [*Scotice*, gun made of quill-barrel for shooting peas (and 'cracking,' which also means pleasantly conversing).] ever to ——, who drank it all in like nectar, while my mother looked cross enough, and I had to listen to the whispered confidences of Mrs. Hunt. But for me, who was declared to be grown 'quite prim and elderly,' I believe they would have communicated their mutual experiences in a retired window seat till morning. 'God bless you, Miss ——,' was repeated by Hunt three several times in tones of ever-increasing pathos and tenderness, as he handed her downstairs behind me. ——, for once in her life, seemed past speech. At the bottom of the stairs a demur took place. I saw nothing; but I heard, with my wonted glegness—what think you?—a couple of handsome smacks! and then an almost inaudibly soft 'God bless you, Miss ——!' Now just remember what sort of looking woman is —— ——; and figure their transaction! If he had kissed me, it would have been intelligible, but ——, of all people!"

There is a great deal of drollery, mixed with not a little contempt, in Mrs. Carlyle's frequent references to a certain little bandy-legged bishop, a worldly and conceited man much too fond of thrusting himself upon her, who always figures in this correspondence by the sobriquet of "Cuttikins," an old Scotch word for spatterdashes:

"Dearest—The postman presented me your letter to-night in Cheyne walk, with a bow extraordinary. He is a jewel of a postman; whenever he has put a letter from you into the box he both knocks and rings, that not a moment may be lost in taking possession of it. In acknowledgment whereof, I crossed the street one day, when Cuttikins, who stayed a week and returned twice, was with me, and at that moment doing the impossible to be entertaining, for the purpose of saluting his (the postman's) baby, which he was carrying out for an airing. The rage of Cuttikins at this interruption was considerable; he looked at me as if he could have eaten me raw, and remarked with a concentrated spleen, 'Well, I must say, never did I see any human being so improved in amiability as you are. Everybody and everything seems to be honored with a particular affection from you.' 'Everything,' thought I, 'except you;' but I contented myself with saying, 'Isn't it a darling baby?' Poor Cuttikins, his aunt did not die; so he is gone with the prospect of—alas!—of having to return ere long. The last day he came, John Sterling exploded him in a way that would have done your heart good to see. John looked at me as much as to say, 'Does he bore you?' and I gave my shoulders a little shrug in the affirmative; whereupon John jumped to his feet and said in a polite undertone, as audible, however, for the bishop as for me, 'Well, my good friend, if you cannot keep your engagement with me, I must go by myself—I am too late already.' The cool assurance of this speech was inimitable, for I had no engagement in the world with him; but the bishop, suspecting nothing, sprang to his feet, and was off in a minute with apologies for having detained me.

"Well, I actually accomplished my dinner at the Kay Shuttleworths.' Mrs. —— was the only lady at dinner; old Miss Rogers, and a young *wersh*-looking (*waterish*, an emphatic Scotch word) person with her, came in the evening; it was a very locked-jaw sort of business. Little Helps was there, but even I could not animate him; he looked pale and as if he had a pain in his stomach. Milnes was there, and 'affable' enough, but evidently overcome with a feeling that weighed on all of us—the feeling of having been dropped into a vacuum. There were various other men, a Sir Charles Lemon, Cornewall Lewis, and some other half-dozen insipidities, whose names did not fix themselves in my memory. Mrs. —— was an insupportable bore; she has surely the air of a retired unfortunate female; her neck and arms were naked, as if she had never eaten of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil! She reminded me forcibly of the Princess Huncamunca, as I once saw her represented in a barn. She ate and drank with a certain voracity, sneezed once during the dinner, just like a hale old man, 'and altogether' nothing could be more ungraceful, more unfeminine than her whole bearing. She talked a deal about America and her poverty with exquisite bad taste. Indeed, she was every way a displeasing spectacle to me.

"Mazzini's visit to Lady Baring (as he calls her) went off wonderfully well. I am afraid, my dear, this Lady Baring of yours, and his, and John Mill's, and everybody's, is an arch coquette. She seems to have played her cards with Mazzini really too well; she talked to him with the highest commendations of George Sand, expressed the utmost longing to read the new edition of 'Lelia;' nay, she made him a mysterious signal with her eyes, having first looked two or three times toward John Mill and her husband,' clearly intimating that she had something to tell him about —— which they were not to hear; and when she could not make him understand, she 'shook her head impatiently, which from a woman, especially in your England, was—what shall I say?—confidential upon my honor.' I think gentle influence he must have cut himself off from the society of mankind, that but for her watchfulness and tact he must have utterly broken down and failed in his most important tasks—if that could have satisfied her, she would have had her reward. But a nature such as hers required something more. Sympathy, consideration, tenderness, companionship, gratitude, were essential to her happiness, and she was taught that she must do without them. As Carlyle became more and more absorbed in his writing he drew away from his wife. Worse still, he began to find entertainment in other houses. The painful episode of his intimacy with the family of Lord Ashburton, and the grief which thence ensued to Mrs. Carlyle, have been told in the "Letters and Memorials" and the judicious accompanying note of Mr. Froude. Mrs. Carlyle saw, or fancied, that after she had worked for her husband like a slave and made it possible for him to rise into fame, she was becoming a mere "accident of his lot," and that he had leisure for the society of others though he had none for her. Beyond a doubt she was unreasonably jealous; yet her husband owed her an immense debt which he seems to have had little disposition to pay. She made no secret of her dislike to the frequent visits at Bath House and the Grange, but Carlyle would brook no opposition, and as long as Lady Ashburton lived the cause of dissension continued. The consequence was a serious estrangement, of which the traces are sadly perceptible in the correspondence. Yet even before this trouble began it seems to us that a tone of sorrow and disappointment can be discerned in Mrs. Carlyle's letters; she writes to her husband with not less gentleness; she watches over him with the same unsleeping care; she is as eager as ever to give up everything to his comfort; but a certain light has gone out of her confidences; she turns with a new impulse of tenderness to her best female friends; we cannot help wondering whether she has begun to think of her life as possibly a mistake, her sacrifice as possibly too great for one who "gave her no human help nor tenderness." "Young, and pretty, and happy," she writes in her diary; "God bless me, to think that I was once all that!" It does not appear, from anything in these volumes, that Mrs. Carlyle looked beyond this world for consolation and support in her troubles, but once this despairing cry breaks from her: "Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed. My soul also is sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: O save me, for Thy mercies' sake."

There were a few days of happiness reserved for her at the very last. The Ashburton trouble was over. "Frederick" was nearly finished. Mrs. Carlyle had met with a severe accident, entailing long and terrible sufferings, and her husband, who had never been more than half conscious of her ailments until now, suddenly awoke to realities. All the old affection revived on her part, and on his we find some remarkable manifestations of tenderness and sympathy. She is returning home after a tour of convalescence, and Mr. Carlyle "rushed out in his dressing gown and kissed me, and wept over me, and was in the act of getting down out of the cab—much to the edification of the neighbors at their windows, I have no doubt." It was still her fortune to be of some notable use to her husband in the ordering of his affairs, and to rejoice in unwonted evidences of his appreciation and love. He went to Edinburgh in 1866 to deliver his address as Lord Rector of the University, and she waited with feverish anxiety for news of how he fared. This is the letter she wrote him the next day:

"I made so sure of a letter this morning from some of you—and 'nothing but a double letter for Miss Welsh.' Perhaps I should—that is, ought to—have contented myself with Tyndall's adorable telegram, which reached me at Cheyne Row five minutes after 6 last evening, considering the sensation it made.

"Mrs. Warren and Maggie were helping to dress me for Forster's birthday, when the telegraph boy gave his double knock. 'There it is!' I said. 'I am afraid, cousin, it is only the postman,' said Maggie. Jessie rushed up with the telegram. I tore it open and read, 'From John Tyndall' (Oh, God bless John Tyndall in this world and the next!) 'to Mrs. Carlyle.' 'A perfect triumph.' I read it to myself, and then read it aloud to the gaping chorus. And chorus all began to dance and clap their hands. 'Eh, Mrs. Carlyle! Eh, hear to that!' cried Jessie 'I told you, ma'am,' cried Mrs. Warren, 'I told you how it would be.' 'I'm so glad, cousin! you'll be all right now, cousin,' twittered Maggie, executing a sort of leap-frog round me. And they went on clapping their hands, till there arose among them a sudden cry for brandy! 'Get her some brandy!' 'Do, ma'am, swallow this spoonful of brandy; just a spoonful!' For, you see, the sudden solution of the nervous tension with which I have been holding in my anxieties for days—nay, weeks, past—threw me into as pretty a little fit of hysterics as you ever saw.

"I went to Forster's, nevertheless, with my telegram in my hand, and 'John Tyndall' in the core of my heart! And it was pleasant to see with what hearty good-will all there—Dickens and Wilkie Collins as well as Fuz—received the news; and we drank your health with great glee."

Eighteen days after this, Carlyle being still in Scotland, she wrote an affectionate letter to her "dearest," proposing to buy for him a certain portrait of Frederick the Great which she thought he might like. In the afternoon she went out for a drive in Hyde Park, in a carriage which he had lately given her. The coachman noticed that she was very still, and growing alarmed, asked a lady to look in. She was dead, with her hands laid on her lap, and "a beautiful expression on her face." "The lines on which her character was laid down," said her intimate friend, Miss Jewsbury, "were grand, but the result was blurred and distorted and confused." Whose fault that was, we need not pause to ask.

It is a fair presumption that Carlyle, even after his loss, cannot really have understood the tragedy of this desolate and noble life, or he would never have published its secrets. There are some bitter letters especially, belonging to the darkest period of Mrs. Carlyle's unhappiness, which only a husband of extraordinarily blunt sensibilities could have exposed to the vulgar gaze. But even in the notes of lamentation and remorse with which he has sprinkled the correspondence, one can detect the intense self-absorption which fatally warped his character. "Alas, alas, sinner that I am!" he cries again and again; but he leaves us in doubt whether he is not weeping far more over his own sorrows than over hers, and it is certain that the manner in which he refers from time to time to his transgressions indicates a most inadequate sense of their gravity. Even in her last desperate and painful illness, when she was clinging to him with such a touching renewal of the old affection, and he was beginning to see something of the suffering to which he had so long closed his eyes, we do not perceive that he thought of giving her much companionship. He exhibits himself taking gloomy rides, with no companion but his horse, and brooding over his multiform disgusts; or shutting himself up with his dreary Prussian books away from her sight. "I always counted 'Frederick' itself to be the prime source of all her sorrows," he says, "as well as my own; that to end it was the condition of new life to us both, of which there was a strange, all hope in me. Not above thrice can I recollect when, on stepping out in the morning, the thought struck me, cold and sharp, 'She will die and leave thee here!' and always before next day I had got it cast out of me again." "And leave thee here!" That perhaps is the keynote of Carlyle's grief. "By the calamity of April last," he wrote to Emerson, "I lost my little all in this world; and have no soul left who can make any corner of this world into a *home* for me any more. Bright, heroic, tender, true and noble was that lost treasure of my heart, who faithfully accompanied me in all the rocky ways and climbings; and I am forever poor without her."

We have spoken of Carlyle's fatal fault as the habit of self-absorption. He has been widely denounced since the publication of his "Reminiscences" as a man of intense selfishness; but although selfishness was undoubtedly an element in his character, it seems to us that his hardness and want of sympathy was not so much love of self as hatred and contempt for the existing order of the universe. "The solitude, the silence of my poor soul, in the centre of this roaring whirlpool called Universe, is great always, and sometimes strange and almost awful. I have two million talking bipeds without feathers close at my elbow, too; and of these it is often hard for me to say whether the so-called 'wise' or the almost professedly foolish are the more inexpressibly unproductive to me. 'Silence, silence!' I often say to myself; 'Be silent, thou poor fool; and prepare for that divine Silence which is now not far!'" This was his habitual it was. John Mill appeared to be loving her very much, and taking great pains to show her that his opinions were right ones. By the way, do you know that Mill considers Robespierre 'the greatest man that ever lived,' his speeches far surpassing Demosthenes'? He begins to be too absurd, that John Mill! I heard Milnes saying at the Shuttleworths' that 'Lord Ashley was the greatest man alive; he was the only man that Carlyle praised in his book.' I daresay he knew I was overhearing him."

With sketches like these she enlivened her copious domestic correspondence, while she was burdened with household vexations made almost intolerable by her husband's peculiar requirements, and tortured by physical sufferings which seem to have been hardly realized until she died under them. Drollery, imagination and acute original criticism flashed out amid the chronicles of the kitchen.

But the charm of Jane Carlyle's letters, like the charm of the woman herself, was something far more precious than intellectual acuteness or brilliant wit. It is impossible to read them without conceiving a sort of attachment to her. She was one of those rare beings, sent into the world as if for the comfort of their acquaintances, whom one loves by instinct. "It is impossible to tell," she wrote during a long illness, "who is kindest to me; my fear is always that I shall be stifled with roses. They make so much of me, and I am so weak. The Countess of Airlie was kneeling beside my sofa yesterday, embracing my feet and kissing my hands! A German girl said the other day: 'I think, Mrs. Carlyle, a many, many peoples love you very dear!' It is true, and what I have done to deserve all that love I haven't the remotest conception." It was not by any means from the sentimental alone that she received such demonstrations of affection. Some remarkable illustrations are given in these volumes of the regard with which she inspired very different sorts of persons, from the great to the humble, from the man of letters to the Scotch peasant. "I have been belated in my letters and in everything this week," she writes, "by having had to give from two to three hours every day to a man who has unexpectedly lost his mother. He has five sisters here, and female friends world without end—is, in fact, of all men I know, the most popular; and such is relationship and friendship in London that he has fled away from everybody to me, who wasn't aware before that I was his particular friend the least in the world. But I have always had the same sort of attraction for miserable people and for mad people that amber has for straws. Why or how, I have no idea." Nor can any of us exactly tell the secret of such women. Transparent simplicity of character, quickness of sympathy, fineness as well as warmth of feeling, generosity, high-mindedness, good sense—these are a part of their gifts; but there is an indefinable something besides which goes to our hearts. We turn to them by impulse.

It was a strange fate which united this bright, sensitive and loving creature to a man who had so little power of repaying her devotion as Thomas Carlyle. Her family were somewhat higher than his in the social order, and at the time of their marriage Carlyle was not only poor but undistinguished. She was the first to perceive his genius. She believed in him. We can hardly doubt that from the beginning she resolved to sacrifice her own life in helping him to bear poverty, in saving him from all cares and annoyances that would interfere with his intellectual work; to use her own illustration, she stood between him and trouble, "imitating in a small humble way the Roman soldier who gathered his arms full of the enemy's spears, and received them all into his own breast." It was a noble act of self-effacement; whether she might not have been fitted for a happier lot she seems never to have paused to wonder—at any rate before it was too late. Appropriately enough, the "Letters and Memorials" begin with the removal in 1834 to the house in Chelsea, where for more than thirty years she was to labor and suffer as a patient drudge. "Never," says her husband, "did I see such suffering from ill-health borne so patiently as by this most sensitive of delicate creatures all her life long." She worked like an upper servant. Before long there was plenty of money in the purse, but Mr. Carlyle's exactions were always hard to meet; the mistress must be often in the kitchen, or there was a violent explosion of wrath at the table over some unsatisfactory bit of cookery; it was a weary journey from the sick chamber to the kitchen because the master required two whole floors of the house for his exclusive use. "His nerves were always in a state of irritation when he was writing," says Mr. Froude; noises drove him nearly frantic; he was unreasonable, morose and brutal. During the thirteen miserable years especially which he spent in the composition of his "Frederick"—a task under which he often lost heart—he was a torment to himself and to all around him. He speaks of the night in 1865 when he went out to post the last leaf of the manuscript of that work; "sad rather, mournfully thankful, but indeed half killed and utterly wearing out and sinking into stupefied collapse." "On her face, too, when I went out, there was a silent, faint and pathetic smile, which I well felt at the moment and better now! Often enough had it cut me to the heart to think what she was suffering by this book, in which she had no share, no interest, nor any word at all; and with what noble and perfect constancy of silence she bore it all." The long story of her struggles with workpeople and house-cleaners; her devices, always adroit and successful, for silencing neighboring dogs, parrots, poultry and pianos; her weeks of confusion and hard manual labor at home while Carlyle was trying to refresh himself by travel—is pathetic and yet not without an element of the grotesque. She wrote thus to her sister-in-law after one of the periodical household earthquakes:

"Carlyle returned from his travels very bilious, and continues very bilious up to this hour. The amount of bile that he does bring home to me, in these cases, is something 'awfully grand!' Even through that deteriorating medium he could not but be struck with a 'certain admiration' at the immensity of needlework I had accomplished in his absence, in the shape of chair covers, sofa covers, window curtains, etc., etc., and all the other manifest improvements into which I had put my whole genius and industry, and so little money as was hardly to be conceived! For three days his satisfaction over the rehabilitated house lasted; on the fourth, the young lady next door took a fit of practising on her accursed pianoforte, which he had quite forgotten seemingly, and he started up disenchanted in his new library, and informed heaven and earth in a peremptory manner that 'there he could neither think nor live,' that the carpenter must be brought back and 'steps taken to make him a quiet place somewhere—perhaps best of all on the roof of the house.' Then followed interminable consultations with the said carpenter, yielding, for some days, only plans (wild ones) and estimates. The roof on the house could be made all that a living author of irritable nerves could desire: silent as a tomb, lighted from above; but it would cost us £120! Impossible, seeing that we may be turned out of the house any year! So one had to reduce one's schemes to the altering of rooms that already were. By taking down a partition and instituting a fire-place where no fire-place could have been fancied capable of existing, it is expected that some bearable approximation to that ideal room in the clouds will be realized. But my astonishment and despair on finding myself after three months of what they call here 'regular mess,' just when I had got every trace of the workpeople cleared away, and had said to myself 'Soul, take thine ease, or at all events thy swing, for thou hast carpets nailed down and furniture rubbed for many days!' just when I was beginning to lead the dreaming, reading, dawdling existence which best suits me, and alone suits me in cold weather, to find myself in the thick of a new 'mess': the carpets, which I had nailed down so well with my own hands, tumbled up again, dirt, lime, whitewash, oil, paint, hard at work as before, and a prospect of new cleanings, new sewings, new arrangements stretching away into eternity for anything I see!"

"I clean beautifully," she wrote to her husband, "when you do not dishearten me with hypercriticism. So never fear, dearest! Never fear about that, or anything else under heaven. Try all that ever you can to be patient and good-natured with your *povera piccola Gooda*, and then she loves you and is ready to do anything on earth that you wish; to fly over the moon, if you bade her. But when the *signor della casa* has neither kind look nor word for me, what can I do but grow desperate, fret myself to fiddlestrings, and be a torment to society in every direction." That was in the early years of the Chelsea establishment. Poor woman, she learned before long that her sacrifice was to be even greater than she expected. Patience and good-nature were not in the catalogue of Carlyle's qualities. If it had satisfied her to know that she "gathered her arms full of the enemy's spears," that without her care the man of genius would have been incapable of literary work, that without her mood. He wrapped himself in the belief that the world was a chaos of babble and inanity, and that mankind were rushing into the abyss. In a heart bursting with bitterness and pride there was little room for love, or gratitude, or any of the softer emotions. His friendship with Emerson might be cited as a proof that he was not incapable of a sentimental attachment. The recently published volumes of "Correspondence" make it clear, however, that this intimacy rested—so far as Carlyle's share of it went—upon a purely intellectual basis. Emerson gave to Carlyle the comprehension and intelligent support of which even the scornful philosopher felt, although he might not always admit, the need. Not always; but at times he did acknowledge how precious it was to him. "You are, and have for a long time been, the one of all the sons of Adam who, I felt, completely understood what I was saying; and answered with a truly *human* voice,—inexpressibly consolatory to a poor man in his lonesome pilgrimage toward the evening of the day!" For this appreciative friend he did cherish a genuine fondness. But it was a selfish fondness. He loved Emerson for what Emerson was to Carlyle, not for what Emerson was in himself; and of that essential ingredient of true friendship, the readiness to make sacrifices, we find no evidence that this sentiment contained a trace. Carlyle had been all his life accepting sacrifices; it was not in his way to make them.

On the other side, the affection of Emerson for Carlyle was a pure and beautiful emotion, which began with intellectual sympathy and ripened into a touching personal regard. There is something indescribably fine in the pride and enthusiasm with which Emerson watches his friend's work, and rejoices in the growth of his fame. He is made as happy by Carlyle's genius as if it were his individual possession. He delights in it with a simplicity which is almost boyish. No one can say just wherein lies the difference in the letters of the two men; both are cordial and gentle, both are appreciative; but there is a contrast which the reader cannot help feeling. The savage cynicism of the one, the exquisite urbanity and composure of the other, are the expression of two characters radically unlike, and when they struck a partnership one gave a great deal more than the other. The unequal friendship was the inevitable consequence, for one thing, of differing temperaments, and the contrast their natures, especially in their capacity for emotion, is singularly illustrated by two passages in their letters bearing upon the approach of old age: "You will think me far gone," wrote Carlyle, "and much bankrupt in hope and heart;—and indeed I am; as good as without hope and without fear; a gloomily serious, silent and sad old man; gazing into the final chasm of things, in mute dialogue with 'Death, Judgment and Eternity' (dialogue *mute* on *both* sides!), not caring to discourse with poor articulate-speaking fellow-creatures on *their* sorts of topics. It is right of me; and yet also it is not right. I often feel that I had better be dead than thus indifferent, contemptuous, disgusted with the world and its roaring nonsense, which I have no thought further of lifting a finger to help, and only try to keep out of the way and shut the door against." And it is thus that the gentle Emerson approaches his evening: "You hug yourself on missing the illusion of children, and must be pitied as having one glittering toy the less. I am a victim all my days to certain graces of form and behavior, and can never come into equilibrium. Now I am fooled by my own young people, and grow old contented."

Perhaps a still more important cause of inequality in their friendship was the radical difference in their way of looking at life. "You seem to me," said Carlyle, "in danger of dividing yourselves from the Fact of this present Universe, in which alone, ugly as it is, can I find any anchorage, and soaring away after Ideas, Beliefs, Revelations and such like,—into perilous altitudes, as I think; beyond the curve of perpetual frost, for one thing! I know not how to utter what impression you give me; take the above as some stamping of the forehoof. Surely I could wish you *returned* into your own poor nineteenth century, its follies and maladies, its blind or half-blind but gigantic toilings, its laughter and its tears, and trying to evolve in some measure the hidden Godlike that lies in *it*;—that seems to me the kind of feat for literary men." "I have to object still (what you will call objecting against the Law of Nature) that we find you a Speaker indeed, but as it were a *Soliloquizer* on the eternal mountain-tops only, in vast solitudes where men and their affairs lie all hushed in a very dim remoteness; and only the *man* and the stars and the earth are visible,—whom, so fine a fellow seems he, we could perpetually punch into, and say, 'Why won't you come down and help us, then? We have terrible need of one man like you down among us! It is cold and vacant up there; nothing paintable but rainbows and emotions; come down, and you shall do life-pictures, passions, facts,—which *transcend* all thought, and leave it stuttering and stammering.'" "What you say respecting the remoteness of my writing and thinking from real life," replied Emerson, "though I hear substantially the same criticism made by my countrymen, I do not know what it means. If I can at any time express the law and the ideal right, that should satisfy me without measuring the divergence from it of the last Act of Congress." The world knows now which was in the right, and which saw the most of the Truth which both loved so earnestly;—he who fought, and gnashed his teeth, and railed, and wounded gentle hearts, "down here," and yet, with all his burning hatred of shams and injustice, did nevertheless hug black wrongs and delusions now happily exploded; or he who from the serene heights spoke with a gentle and sweet voice, and looked upon the world with a clear and far-reaching eye.